



Metro Parks' Secret Garden

Hidden behind the Metro Parks' Art Center in Centennial Park is a treasure that many Nashville residents have never visited. Thirty one years ago the members of the Nashville Herb Society planted a garden with the goal of educating the community about the pleasures of growing herbs. Unlike the Cheekwood Herb Study Garden, also planted and maintained by the Herb Society, the Art Center garden is free to the public.

While the garden is owned by Metro Parks, the Herb Society handles all labor and expense of the garden. If you visit the garden on a Wednesday morning you are likely to find an Herb Society member hard at work. In 2007 members worked a total of 362 hours in the garden and spent over \$1990 on plants and supplies for the garden.

If you visit the garden look for facts sheets about a featured herb, these change throughout the season. This spring there are plans to fill pots at the entrance of the Art Center with culinary herbs and to supply visitors with recipes using these herbs.

There are plans to register the Art Center Garden's collection of thymes with The Herb Society of America. Every thyme plant in the garden will be catalogued with the source of origin. The Herb Society of New Orleans has a sage collection like this. When it was lost to Katrina, they were able to go back to the original sources and rebuild the collection.

Every spring the Herb Society has its only fund raiser, with proceeds going towards both gardens. This year the sale is at 9 a.m., April 19, 2008 until sell out. The location is the Tennessee Fairgrounds, Sports Arena in Nashville.

The sale features over 18,000 plants, representing over 200 herb varieties. Plants are arranged alphabetically for ease in shopping and shoppers receive a handy guide for growing and using herbs. The "answer ladies" will be on hand to answer questions regarding planting, growing and using herbs. The group will also offer personal shoppers.